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U. S. Department of Agriculture.

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Tuesday, Sept. 22, 1936.

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Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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The questions that have been coming in this week lead me to suspect that I have a large number of cold-blooded listeners -- or at least listeners who believe in planning early for winter comfort. For example, here is a letter asking for information about a warm lining for a winter coat. And here is another inquiring whether the style and cut of a coat has anything to do with its warmth. Then, still another brings up the old controversy of weight versus warmth.

And clothes aren't the only problems of cold-weather comfort which listeners have on their minds these days. Apparently a lot of folks are also considering how to keep warm this winter by night as well as by day. Anyway, they are already asking questions about buying warm blankets.

Listeners, this all looks to me like a campaign against the shivers. I'll join and do my bit by bringing you answers from the clothing and textile people at the Bureau of Home Economics.

First, let's reply to the lady who has warm linings on her mind. She says she is planning to buy a winter coat this fall and wants to be sure of getting one that is warmly lined.

In that case, she'll be wise to examine carefully the interlining rather than the lining proper. Of course you know that most ready-made winter coats nowadays have a lining of some silk or silk-like material, and also have an interlining of -- But wait. I'm going to answer this question by quoting what Miss Clarice Scott has to say about interlinings in her new guide to buying women's cloth coats.

Quoting Miss Scott: "Interlinings of coats affect both their warmth and appearance, but, because they do not show, they are often overlooked. The material most commonly used is napped cotton in either a white or gray mixture. It is inexpensive and lasting but not so satisfactory as the lightweight plain-weave wool used in the better grade coats."

Please note that statement, listeners -- that statement about lightweight plain-weave wool which is more satisfactory than napped cotton. Here's why.

"This material is warmer, not bulky in proportion to its warmth, and more helpful in preserving the appearance of the coat."

Three good reasons, I should say -- more warmth, less bulk, better appearance.

To continue from the leaflet: "Wool interlining resists wrinkles and falls back into shape; but cotton holds wrinkles and does not recover along with the outer cloth.

"Another kind of interlining used more often with the lighter rather than the heavier outer fabrics consists of a layer of wool fibers quilted between two layers of silk and cotton mull, cambric, or cheeseclothlike cotton. The better qualities of quilted linings are made with mull, and the layer of wool is about an eighth of an inch thick. Cheapened imitations are made with sleazy cottons, and the layer of wool is so thin and scanty that it can hardly be described truthfully as a wool interlining. Then again, some quilted linings have matted cotton fibers substituted for the wool."

No wonder Miss Scott suggests that you take time to examine and know exactly what quality you are getting in the interlining of the coat.

Now to answer the second listener who has a coat question to ask. She inquires whether the cut and style of a coat have anything to do with its warmth.

The answer to that is: "My, yes!" (The yes is underlined, too, and followed by an exclamation point.)

I'll quote Miss Scott again on this matter of styles to keep you warm. She says: "Look for both design and material that will keep out cold. A neck line that fastens up about the throat, sleeves that are close about the wrists, and a wide front lap that does not flap open are features that make for warmth."

Maybe I should stop and repeat those 3 features that make for warmth. First, a neck line that fastens up about the throat and keeps the wintry breezes from blowing down your neck. Second, sleeves that are close about the wrists and keep the chill from stealing up your arms. Third, a wide front flap that does not flap open -- even when you walk, and one that will still cover your knees when you sit down.

Miss Scott also says: "Notice the weight of a coat in comparison to its warmth. The heaviest is not necessarily the warmest as that depends largely on both the construction of the fabric and the design of the coat."

Which brings us, listeners, to the third question about warmth versus weight.

The mistaken idea seems to exist among many people that the heavier -- that is, the weightier -- a coat or a blanket is, the warmer it is. As a matter of fact, the physicists, and the textile people, and also the insulating engineers will tell you that it is not the fibers in a fabric that make it warm, but the spaces of still air which those fibers hold. These little air spaces in the fabric are the insulators -- hold in the warmth. So the more fluffy or fuzzy a fabric is, the more spaces of still air it holds and the better an insulator it is. For this reason, wool is usually a warmer fabric than cotton. And a napped fabric is warmer than a closely woven, heavy unnapped fabric. This holds true for coat fabrics as well as for blankets.

Some other day I'll answer the rest of the blanket questions.